

1.5 MEMBERSHIP OF SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE (TP-SM)

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to join the South East Melbourne (SEM) group from 1 January 2018.

INTRODUCTION

Council has been invited to become a member of regional advocacy group South East Melbourne (SEM). SEM is an incorporated association consisting of the municipalities of Cardinia, Casey, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Kingston and Mornington Peninsula. The group partners with key business leaders in undertaking independent advocacy for initiatives that drive growth and prosperity in the south east.

ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of SEM is to support projects and advocacy for initiatives that build on the region's economic base and improve liveability for all in the region.

The six key priorities for South East Melbourne are:

1. Delivering jobs and investment
2. Expanding our nationally significant manufacturing sector
3. Growing our world-class food economy
4. Connecting our education and skills sector to industry
5. Achieving a more connected community
6. Collaborating to attract infrastructure that increases liveability

A copy of the South East Melbourne 5 Year Business Plan is provided at Attachment 1.

The Board of SEM also includes three non-local government members, Simon McKeon AO from Monash University, the Hon. Simon Crean and Mr Bruce Billson.

Neighbouring councils, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Casey and Cardinia are registered members of SEM.

Although Monash is traditionally associated with the eastern suburbs of Melbourne for regional groupings at a State level, the majority of the employment and industry areas of Monash have strong business and geographic links with the south east. This is particularly the case with the business and industry based in the Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster.

Given our unique geographic location, at the boundary of two regions, Council also continues to be engaged with the eastern region grouping of Councils in economic and other development issues.

SEM is a significant contributor to the state and national economy, with over \$97.5 billion in total output and Gross Regional Product (GRP) at an estimated \$43 billion.

Becoming a member of SEM supports the Monash 2013-2017 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan:

- Key Strategic Direction 1 Business Support
 - Action 1.4.4 'Provide assistance to networks in the region that assist businesses within Monash'.
- Key strategic direction 2 Economic Precincts
 - Action 2.4.2 'Advocate to the State and Federal Government to assist in the retention of manufacturing businesses within the municipality and State'.

FINANCIAL

The yearly membership fee for SEM is \$29,800 + GST. This figure is not budgeted for in this financial year.

Joining in January requires a pro rata membership payment that can be funded through underspends in the existing budget.

An allocation would be made in the 2018/19 budget for an annual membership of the SEM.

CONCLUSION

The membership to South East Melbourne at an annual fee of \$29,800 (GST excl.) acknowledges the importance of the south east region to the Monash economy.

Membership of the group from January will immediately allow Council to further develop synergies within the Cluster and into the broader south east economy. This will also assist in raising the profile and role of the Cluster as the key employment and economic growth area for southern and eastern Melbourne.

It will provide Council with a regional voice, associated with the key employment and industry areas of the South East of Melbourne. A review of Council's membership is recommended annually to understand whether there is evidence of a return of investment.